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DUXBURY CLIPPER

## The Most Popular Boats In The Old Days Were Dorries

My generation of Powder Point children—and they were two generations back—liked the annual feat of rowing their dorries through the marshes up to Rainbow Bridge in Green Harbor. Once under the bridge, they entered the narrow deep channel of Cut River, then after a second bridge they reached the open ocean.

This required some knowledge of the channels, which was acquired early because we were allowed in dorries pretty young, once we could swim. Back of Great Wood Island runs a broad and inviting channel which narrows down and goes absolutely nowhere. Some embittered soul gave it the name of Labor in Vain. Eastward runs a little channel that goes to the settlement by the cable office in the dark woods of the Whale's Back. Between these lies the right channel, winding unbelievably till it reaches Green Harbor.

Beyond Rainbow Bridge it is obvious that the channel of Cut River was once cut artificially, because the sides are steep and the depth considerable. Long ago I carelessly explained this canal as being made for the lobster boats which belonged in Duxbury and went fishing off Green Harbor and Brant Rock. They were little

black boats with a gaff only and no boom, and light masts that were unstepped easily for the two bridges. They came filing home in a pretty line of two or three.

Increasing years make for boasting; and I like to remember that I was one of a group of neighbors who went in three dorries over these channels in the summer after the great storm of '98. That storm cut a hole in the outer beach just north of the Gurnet bridge, through which at high water the ocean ran into the bay. We rowed out through Green Harbor and Cut River, then south outside the beach to the new gap. We rushed the dorries over the shallow water into the bay, and so home. It was quite a pull.

### Famous Boats

All this happened before the water sports centered at the Yacht Club, and every family then had a dory in its back yard or a neigh-

bor's and used them freely and happily. I see fewer and fewer dorries in the town, but once they were the only small boats, and they were beautifully made. They bore such names as Watson (Clark's Island), Ransom, Delano. Of mine, one cost \$10, and \$15, and the last one, now current, all of \$40, bought as we approached the present age of high living. The old dorries carried the orthodox thole pins. When the Gurnet Bridge was built, those of us who lived inside of it went over to the effete rowlocks because the narrow passages under the bridge sometimes required a swifter shipping of the oars than the thole pins allowed. It was a step toward sophistication.

In the book "Salt Rivers of the Massachusetts Shore," the author, Henry Howe, describes the spread of the Plymouth colony as northward, because of bleak hills to the south. Duxbury and Marshfield were soon settled and cultivated. William Green, brother-in-law of Thomas Weston, had a fishing station on the north end of Duxbury beach, and his name was given to the village. Then comes the news.

Plymouth felt so strongly the need of Marshfield's output of hay, corn, and lumber, that a canal was cut from the sea into Duxbury bay at Green Harbor, and this was in 1633. In three years it was made 18 feet wide and 6 feet deep. This little channel through which we had to poke our dorries was once wide enough for a ship, and is over three centuries old. The little freighter, classed as a shallop, 300 years ago sailed around Powder Point and across

the bay, safe from the gales of the outer sea. A lovely sight she must have been.

Those of us who have had the luck to row these channels in youth, and those who only look at the beauty of the marshes owe to Mr. Howe this bright picture of our salt creeks bearing a sizeable vessel with food and warmth for our mother town across the bay..

DR. ALICE H. BIGELOW,  
Powder Point